

VLR - 9.15.99  
NRHP - draft

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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**1. Name of Property**

=====

historic name Rife's Mill (DHR File# 082-0284)

other names/site number Silver Lake Mill

=====

**2. Location**

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street & number Corner of Silver Lake Road(Rt.701)and Linhoss Road(Rt. 735)  
not for publication  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Virginia code VA county Rockingham County code 165 zip code 22821

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mc Catherine Messer  
Signature of certifying official

March 29, 2002  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

|  |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|
| _____ entered in the National Register   | _____ | _____ |
| _____ See continuation sheet.            | _____ | _____ |
| _____ determined eligible for the        | _____ | _____ |
| _____ National Register                  | _____ | _____ |
| _____ See continuation sheet.            | _____ | _____ |
| _____ determined not eligible for the    | _____ | _____ |
| _____ National Register                  | _____ | _____ |
| _____ removed from the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| _____ other (explain): _____             | _____ | _____ |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

=====

#### 5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
\_\_\_\_\_ public-local  
\_\_\_\_\_ public-State  
\_\_\_\_\_ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_ district  
\_\_\_\_\_ site  
\_\_\_\_\_ structure  
\_\_\_\_\_ object

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing  |
|--------------|------------------|
| <u>  1  </u> | _____ buildings  |
| _____        | _____ sites      |
| _____        | _____ structures |
| _____        | _____ objects    |
| <u>  1  </u> | _____ Total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Agriculture

Sub: Processing

Storage

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant/not in use

Sub: Processing

Storage

=====

**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Limestone: Brick

roof Metal/iron

walls Wood/weatherboard

other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation sheets

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ b removed from its original location.
- ☐ c a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ d a cemetery.
- ☐ e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ f a commemorative property.
- ☐ g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1822-1996 Significant Dates 1823/1864

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Persons

John J Rife  
Daniel Bowman

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources: DHR File# 82-284  
Negative# 7363/7367 filed August 1983

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property 0.365

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

|   | Zone  | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|-------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 17    | 679910  | 4254350  | 3    | _____   | _____    |
| 2 | _____ | _____   | _____    | 4    | _____   | _____    |

☒ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Richard Martin Owner/Manager  
organization Cedar Row Restorations date 6/21/99

street & number 6 Dudley Rd. Telephone 540 828-4713

city or town Bridgewater state VA zip code 22812

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage  
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society

street & number PO Box 716/Bowman Road and High St. Telephone (540)879-2681

city or town Dayton state VA zip code 22821

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 7

Rife's Mill  
Rockingham County, VA

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## Narrative Description

### Summary Description:

Rife's Mill is located in the central part of the Shenandoah Valley in Rockingham County near the town of Dayton. It faces Silver Lake Road, which runs from Dayton to Route 33, near Dale Enterprise. The building is situated on a dam which forms Silver Lake, a ten-acre lake fed by a large spring. Mole Hill, a local geographical landmark formed by an ancient volcano shaft is visible in the background behind the lake. The building is a large three-story frame structure with white wooden novelty siding, six over six window sash and several warehouse-style sliding and hinged wooden doors. Large metal grain elevators and storage tanks dominate the south elevation, extending upward from a covered loading-dock. The east elevation has two tile-block silos attached to the main structure by a horizontal grain elevator; a metal standing-seam roof painted red covers the main building, the loading-dock roofs and the two silos. On the west elevation, a large Fitz overshot water wheel remains below the head race, which is formed by a concrete lined trough leading from the surface of the lake to the wooden control gates above the wheel. The building has not been well-kept; metal is rusting and paint is peeling, but most problems are cosmetic.

### Detailed Description:

The 40'X 53' mill is located along a dam which contains the flow of a large spring, forming an approximately 10-acre body of water known as Silver Lake. It is a three-story wood-frame structure with a full basement lined with dressed limestone walls and two separate loading docks; one on the south elevation which has a sliding door leading to the basement area, another on the north which allows access to the first floor. Two glazed tile-block silos stand in front of the east elevation, and a sluice and mill race with a large all-iron Fitz water wheel on the west elevation (Fitz water wheels were produced from 1840 to 1967. They were the first company to make all-metal overshot water wheels).<sup>1</sup> The grain elevators and other equipment from the later feed mill operation remain. When the conversion from grist mill to feed mill was done, much of the equipment from the water-powered mill was left in place. Most of the gears which the water wheel turned remain in place in the basement, and many of the upper shafts and gears remain above the third floor. A Salem Manufacturing electric freight elevator remains in place and a Eureka Compound Driven Elevator Separator, probably too big to move, remains on the third floor. Several other relics of the earlier milling days remain in various places around the building, including wooden belt pulleys, wooden shafts and scales.

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Rockingham County, VA

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**Detailed Description (continued)**

The building is post-and- beam construction, with 10"X 10" stop-chamfered heart-pine posts, and 10"X 12" heart pine beams running the length of the building; most of them are a single 50' unbroken beam. The floor framing has principal joists which cross the longitudinal beams above the posts. The principal floor joists and the 2"X10" regular floor joists sit atop the beams and wall sills. Intermediate wall studs are 3"X 6"; angle braces are used at the junction of all principal joists, principal wall studs and corner posts. The roof framing uses principal rafters, common rafters and purlins. The mill is sided with "German" novelty wood siding, and presently has a standing-seam metal roof. The roof sheathing shows nails left from a wood-shingle roof. Windows are six-over-six double-hung wood sash, one batten door remains on the third floor. Overall condition is fair, with no apparent serious structural problems.



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CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section 8 Page 9

Rife's Mill  
Rockingham County, VA

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## Statement of Significance:

### Summary

The present day Dayton Roller Mills building sits overlooking Silver Lake, a man-made, spring-fed body of water used in the past as a power source for the many mill operations carried out at the site, and as an important source of water for the town of Dayton and the City of Harrisonburg. It was also a popular spot for leisure-time activities, such as picnicking and fishing. The dam which formed Silver Lake was built by John J Rife in 1823, creating a body of water which profoundly influenced the development of the Cooks Creek area of Rockingham County. The dam was built to supply water-power for a grist mill. The mills which used this power source were a central part of the Rifeville/Dayton community for over 175 years. Mills were the hub of many communities in the agriculturally intensive Shenandoah Valley. They were a source of food, community information, and social discourse. Mill owners John Rife and Daniel Bowman were active members of the Brethren community. Presently Silver Lake is a popular trout fishing pond, and the Roller Mills building is abandoned.

### History

The land that the mill and lake now occupy was purchased by John J. Rife in the late 18th century. For many years the town now called Dayton was known as Rifetown or Rifeville (The town officially became Dayton in 1833).<sup>2</sup> In 1822 Rife applied for an Ad Quad Damnum, a petition to construct a dam on a water source which could possibly impact property owners upstream.<sup>3</sup> The 1823 tax records show an increase in value of "\$1725 added for a new mill" to the property owned by John Rife on Cooks Creek.<sup>4</sup>

In 1830, John J Rife sold to Frederic Cline for 12,000(?) dollars "two certain tracts or parcels of land.....the first named tract is the one [on] which the mill stands which formerly belonged to Henry Harshbarger and James Harrison, and adjoining the land of John Florey and John Allebaugh and others....".<sup>5</sup> This first tract consisted of 100 acres. The men listed as former owners were important members of the Dayton community. On October 28, 1839, Frederic Cline sold to Frederick Miller and Daniel Bowman for 12,000 dollars, "two certain tracts or parcels of land .....the first tract is the one on which the [mill stands] which formerly belonged to John J. Rife, Henry Harshbarger and James Harrison.....".<sup>6</sup>

On March 9, 1842 Frederick Miller sold one half interest in two tracts of land to Daniel Bowman for \$6000.<sup>7</sup> This was the same land sold to Frederick Miller and Daniel Bowman by Frederick Cline in 1839. County tax records show the addition of a house in

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section 8 Page 10

Rife's Mill  
Rockingham County, VA

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**History (continued)**

1855, burning of the mill in 1856, an increase of \$4000 in the value of the buildings in 1857, probably repairs to the burned mill, and an increase of \$300 in 1859.<sup>8</sup>

Affidavits from the US Senate filed in the National Archives record a claim made by the estate of Daniel Bowman that "a large flouring mill, saw mill and a dwelling house..." were destroyed by fire set by the Union Army commanded by General Custer under orders from General Sheridan in the Fall of 1864. It is stated that the value of the property was \$11,500.00.<sup>9</sup> The exact date of the mill's reconstruction has not been established, but the 1866 Hotchkiss Map lists Bowman's Mill on Cooks Creek in Dayton.

The 1885 Hammond's Atlas of Rockingham County shows a sawmill and gristmill belonging to Charles P. Arey on the site of Bowman's Mill.<sup>10</sup> Several other owners ran the mill after Arey, the last being Rockingham Milling Company, Inc.

Most of the people connected with the mill, and a large part of the local community were members of the Church of the Brethren (Dunkard). Dunkard settlers arriving in the Linville Creek area of Rockingham County in the early 1780s included the names of Rife, Miller, Kline (Cline) and Bowman. By 1790, some Dunkard families migrated south to the Cook's Creek area.<sup>11</sup> A self-sufficient people, each movement was accompanied by the growth of Brethren-owned commerce, including the expansive Bowman Mills<sup>12</sup> along Linville Creek and the new Rife's Mill along Cook's Creek.

Daniel Bowman, who purchased Rife's mill in 1839, was continuing Dunkard ownership of this centrally-located mill as well as continuing the Bowman family traditions in milling. During Bowman's 40-year ownership, the mill became known as Bowman's mill. A letter addressed to Bowman's Mill (as if it were a town),<sup>13</sup> a school at the north end of Silver Lake known as Bowmans School<sup>14</sup>, and an 1867 Sunday School Picnic<sup>15</sup> at the mill all point to the mill as central in the community's life. Bowman apparently maintained his strong Dunkard beliefs and relationships. Affidavits filed as part of his estate's Civil War claims describe his vehement support of the Union and strong anti-war position.<sup>16</sup> Family members living nearby took food to the Dunkard and Mennonite prisoners being held by Confederate troops at the Rockingham County Courthouse.<sup>17</sup>

The Mill continued to serve as a focal point for the local inhabitants into the 20th century. A sulphur spring on the property was a community gathering spot, the lake continued to be a popular picnicking and fishing spot, and the local farmers continued to bring their grain to be processed at the mill.

(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Rife's Mill  
Rockingham County, VA

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2. Wayland, John W. *A History of Rockingham County, Virginia*. Harrisonburg, Va., 1912/1980. Pg 198
3. Rockingham County Record of Land Causes and Mills, Pg 37
4. Rockingham County Land Tax Books 1821-1829 Reel 279 LVA
5. Rockingham County Deed Book#9 Pg. 469
6. Rockingham County Deed Book#13 Pg. 538
7. Rockingham County Deed Book#15, Pg. 51
8. Rockingham County Land Tax Books 1845-1854
9. United States Senate Congressional Case 14961, *The Case of Benjamin F Bowman, Administrator of Daniel Bowman*. 61st Congress, 2nd Session, S.7674 April 11, 1910, in the National Archives.
10. G.P.H. Publishing. *An Atlas of Rockingham County, Virginia from the 1885 Surveys by J. M. Lathrop and B. N. Griffing*. Strasburg, VA: G.P. Hammond Publishing., 1995. Pg. 10
11. Sappington, Roger E. *The Bretheren in Virginia*. Harrisonburg, VA: The Committee for Bretheren History in Virginia, 1973. pp 30-31
12. Bittinger, Dr Emmert F. "The Jacob and Varena Bowman Family, Bretheren Pioneers of Maryland and Virginia, Part II." *Mennonite Family History*, October 1997 (1997).
13. Letter in the collection of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society
14. Notice in the Harrisonburg Daily News Record, August 27, 1927
15. Harrisonburg Rockingham Historical Society Files
16. Senate Congressional Case 14961
17. Sanger, S.F., and D. Hays. *The Olive Branch of Peace and Good Will to Men*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1907. Pp 142-143

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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Rockingham County, VA

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Rockingham County, VA

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Rife's Mill  
Rockingham County, VA

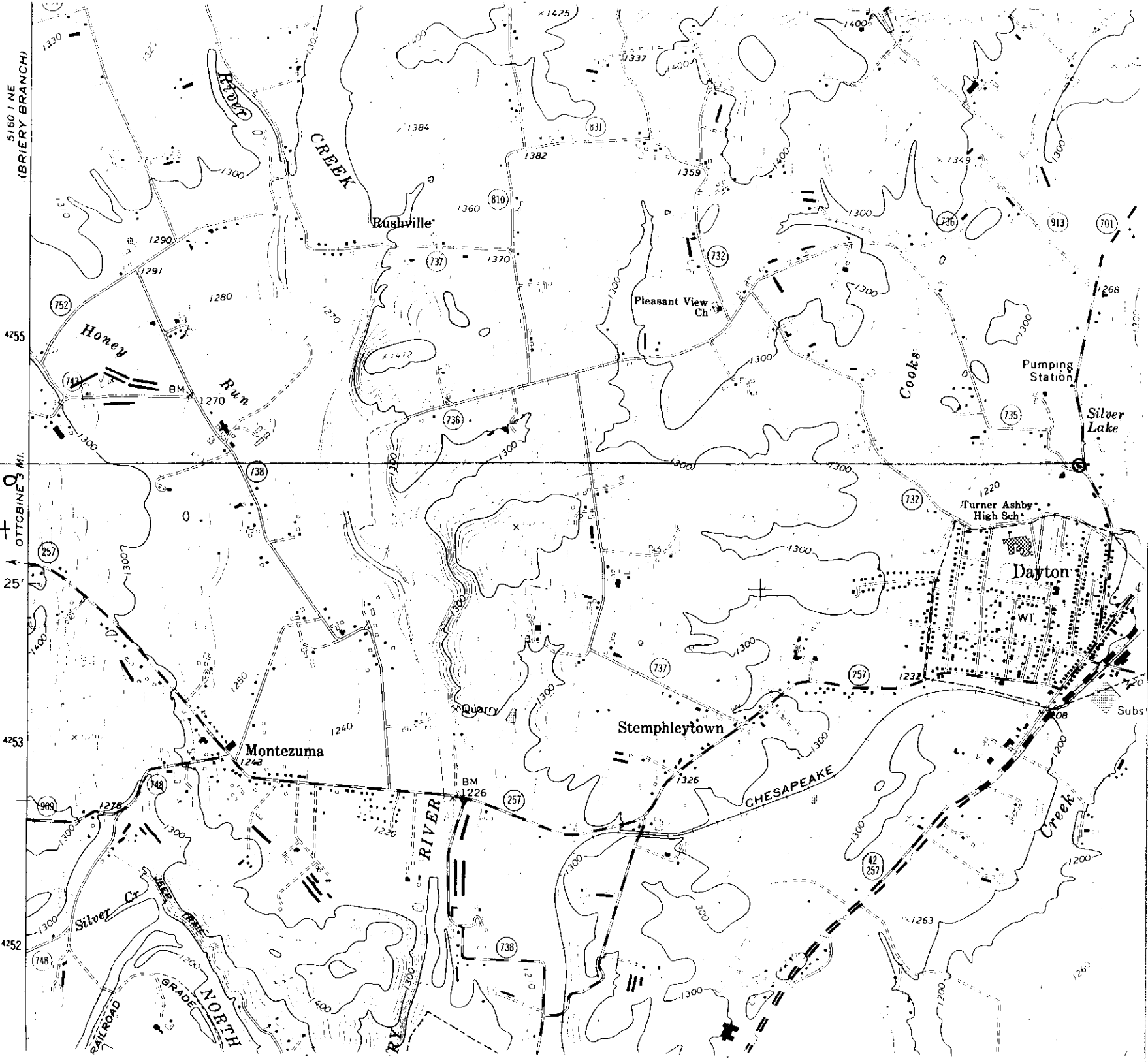
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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The property is bounded by two state roads whose intersection creates the southeast boundary and a 10-acre lake which forms the north and northeast boundary. Route 701 (Silver lake Road) forms the eastern boundary; Route 735 (Linhoss Road) forms the southern boundary; the outer edge of the mill-race forms the western boundary; and the shoreline of Silver Lake forms the northern boundary (see map). The boundaries were established by recorded deed dated June 18, 1946 between the City of Harrisonburg, Virginia and Rockingham Milling Company, Inc., and a plat dated 1945 by W. G. Meyers, City Manager (see enclosed plat). The Rockingham County property identification number for Rife's Mill is #107-"A"-125A.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries of the property were designated to include all structures significant to the mill operations and are within the historic period of significance.



RIFE'S MILL  
ROCKINGHAM CO  
VIRGINIA  
#082 - 0284

UTM:  
17679910  
4254350